

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org

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Date: May 13, 2020
To: Joe LaClair, Planning Services Manager
Cc: Supervisor Don Horsley
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director
Katie Faulkner, Project Planner
From: Midcoast Community Council
Subject: Moratorium on Projects Using County Funds

The current pandemic crisis is affecting all aspects of our local and national life and the full impact of this will not be known for some time. Because of this, the Midcoast Community Council is asking for a pause to allow the County to invest its money in the community in a predictable and prudent way.

There are planning and development proposals currently under study which will involve significant public expenditure. These proposals deserve robust review and buy-in by the community. And since they will involve long-term changes, they deserve to have the security of a predictable source of funding. We see two major areas in which the current uncertainty caused by COVID-19 negatively impacts any attempt to finalize plans that involve capital expenditure.

First, the current situation does not allow for the usual avenues of informing the community about issues. And it does not allow for the usual ways that community members share and express their concerns and questions. Virtual meetings may be the only way to hold meetings at this time, but they are not enough because they rely on the ability of community members to comfortably access the meetings and to interact with each other and with County staff. The community survey currently being circulated does not address the specifics of CTC proposals or other possible changes. Major changes that will profoundly affect the life of all Coastsiders should not be approved until full community involvement is possible.

Secondly, the County's financial situation is presently unknown, but is expected to be considerably less robust than it has been. Likewise, the finances of individuals, businesses and non-profits may be seriously impaired. The County will have to cope with maintaining essential

functions and an increased burden of providing a safety net to allow recovery for individuals and businesses. Tax revenues and revenues from State and Federal sources are unknown, but likely to be diminished. It is unclear at this point how much will be available for purposes such as public works and other improvements. The County should not make commitments to significant investments until it has a clearer picture of its resources.

The Midcoast Community Council supports a moratorium on any final decision regarding non-urgent County funds until January 2021. At that point, the community will hopefully have been able to participate in a robust review of proposals, the County will have a fuller sense of its resources, and larger governmental and social issues will be clearer. This pause would affect planning for all non-urgent projects that will call for County capital expenditure. Final approval of Connect the Coastside would be delayed until the situation is clearer. Approval and implementation of development projects, whether public or private, would be delayed if they require the County to make improvements to facilitate them. Any development projects already fully approved by the County and any development that is completely privately funded would not be affected, nor would any emergency improvements.

We strongly believe that major changes to the Coastside, even if they are positive, should not be approved without full community acceptance and without knowing the financial position we will be in as this health crisis resolves.

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
s/Len Erickson Chair